

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 19-25 were initially pending in this application. In response to a restriction requirement **Claims 20-22** were previously withdrawn as drawn to a non-elected species. Applicants reserve the right to reinstate said claims in the event a generic claim becomes allowable (e.g., Claim 19). **Claims 26-32** were added previously. **Claims 19 & 26** have been amended herein and **Claims 33 & 34** have been added to more clearly claim certain subject matter. Also, Claims 31 and 32 are cancelled. **No new matter has been entered**. Accordingly, **Claims 19-30 and Claims 33-34** are currently pending in the application. The applicants hereby request entry and consideration of the following amendments and remarks. Reconsideration and allowance are hereby requested.

Allowable Subject Matter:

The Examiner has kindly indicated that **Claims 31 and 32** are considered allowable if amended to incorporate the limitations of the base claims. Accordingly, the limitations of **Claim 31** have been incorporated into amended base **Claim 19**. Moreover, the limitations of **Claim 32** have been incorporated into amended base **Claim 26**. For at least that reason, the applicants submit that Claims 19 and 26 are allowable. In order to avoid complication and duplicative claims, **Claims 31 and 32 have been cancelled**. In addition, **Claims 20-25 and 27-30** all depend on **Claims 19 or 26**. Accordingly, such claims should also be allowable.

Added Claims:

The applicants have added **Claims 33-34**. **Claims 33-34** are drafted to specifically point out certain patentable subject matter. For example, both claims include the limitation of elongate openings in the dielectric layer where the openings “extend into the dielectric layer to a depth sufficient to expose a portion of at least one of the sidewalls of the slots of the copper-containing pad layer, wherein the exposed portion extends a majority of the distance down the sidewall toward the underlying semiconductor substrate”. The cited art, (e.g. *Colgan*) either alone or in any reasonable combination with other references does not teach this limitation. As stated before, the *Colgan* features are insubstantial overetch defects that expose, at most, the tops of the pad layer walls. This is different from the limitations claimed here. In particular, this does not teach exposing a portion of a sidewall that “extends a majority of the distance down the sidewall”. Accordingly, the applicants respectfully suggest that the new claims define over the art of record.

Additionally, these new claims do not present new matter. Support for these added claims can be found throughout the Specification and Drawings. For example, reference to Figs. 4(a)-4(d) and the supporting portions of the Specification is made.

Withdrawn Claims:

Previously withdrawn **Claims 20-22** depend from Claim 19. Since Claim 19 is believed to be allowable for at least the reasons pointed out previously, the applicants respectfully submit that all dependent Claims are also allowable. Accordingly, the applicants request that the previous restriction requirement be withdrawn and that Claims 20-22 be reinstated and allowed.

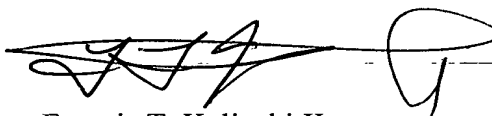
Conclusion:

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the claimed invention as presently presented is patentable over the art of record and that this case is now in condition for allowance.

It is believed that this case is very near allowance. The applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact the undersigned to discuss any issues arising out of this amendment in an effort to telephonically resolve any such issues. Moreover, if the Examiner has any continuing concerns regarding this case, he is invited to contact the undersigned at (650) 961-8300.

Respectfully submitted,

BEYER WEAVER & THOMAS, LLP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Francis T. Kalinski II', followed by a large, stylized circular flourish.

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